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EAST TIMOR HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

"VIOLENCE BY THE STATE AGAINST WOMEN IN EAST TIMOR"

A Report to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women,

Including its Causes and Consequences

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This report is dedicated to Odilia Victor who died in childbirth in August 1997

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women who, in 1998, will report to the UN Commission on Human Rights on the issue of violence perpetrated by the state against women throughout the world. In the East Timor context, very little material is available about violence by the Indonesian authorities against East Timorese women. Further documentation of these violations is still required in order to more accurately report to the international community the true situation of women in East Timor.

In keeping with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, this report does not attempt to cover all violations perpetrated against East Timorese women, but focuses on gender-specific violations. The report documents recent cases of gender-specific violations by the Indonesian authorities against women, and also surveys gender-specific violations against women throughout the twenty-two year history of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, thereby providing a useful historical perspective on the issue.

The meaning of "violence" in the context of violations by the state against women could be interpreted widely to encompass a whole range of violations. However, the full range of violations is not covered here, principally because of the dearth of information available. Few organisations have been able to gather information about violence by the Indonesian authorities against East Timorese women as human rights groups are denied official access to East Timor. Partially because of these difficulties, these kinds of violations have largely avoided international scrutiny.

This report therefore focuses on some of the main gender-specific violations being perpetrated by the Indonesian authorities against East Timorese women: rape and other forms of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, forced "marriage", the use of women as sex "slaves" or "comfort women", and prostitution. These are some the most pressing issues of concern to East Timorese women and indeed to the international community.=20

The ETHRC has already published a detailed report on the issue of violence against East Timorese women in the form of coercive sterilisation and coercive family planning under the Indonesian national family planning program (Keluarga Berencana Nasional).(1) That report contains additional information about rape and sexual abuse, forced marriages and prostitution, some of which is also included here.

CONTEXT

Women subjected to gender-specific violations in East Timor generally live in poor, isolated communities and as such have limited access to independent lawyers or human rights organisations. This not only makes them more vulnerable to human rights violations, but also means that when their rights are violated they are less likely to report the violations or seek justice. Furthermore, gender-specific violations, especially rape and sexual abuse and harassment, often go unreported because of lack of access to East Timor for human rights monitors and because of the high the level of military surveillance.

East Timorese women who are the victims of rape and other forms of sexual abuse are less likely to report the violations because they feel a deep sense of shame for themselves and their families. They are reluctant to pass on information about rape and sexual abuse to non-government organisations (NGOs), let alone report them to military or police authorities. Women are more willing to talk to priests or nuns about their experiences, but Amnesty International reported that an Australian lawyer assisting East Timorese asylum seekers found that:

"Most asylum-seekers who have histories of sexual assault have indicated that they have not spoken to anybody about these instances".(2)

Of the human rights violations that are reported, some have been investigated by the Indonesian Human Rights Commission (KomnasHAM) and the military. But according to Amnesty International, there is no evidence that violations are systematically and independently investigated or that the members of the security forces responsible are brought to justice. Cases which are investigated are usually those taken up by the local or international community. Even then, the security officers are tried in military courts and if sentenced, receive sentences which do not generally take into account the seriousness of the crime. Meanwhile, military and police authorities consistently deny that human rights violations such as rape take place.(3)

Despite official denials, there have been persistent accounts of gender-specific violations which are detailed enough to conclude that there are substantial patterns of rape, sexual abuse and other types of gender-specific violations being perpetrated against women in East Timor.

Indonesia has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), creating a responsibility on Indonesia to promote and protect the right of East Timorese women. In 1994, Indonesia played a prominent role in preparations for the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women by hosting the Second Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Women. At this conference the government restated its commitment to women's rights in ministerial speeches, and also signed the Jakarta Declaration, affirming that women's human rights are "inalienable, integral, and indivisible parts of universal human rights", and that it regarded the implementation of CEDAW as "crucial".

This commitment has not yet been borne out in practice and gestures towards international legitimacy will remain meaningless until the Indonesian government takes concrete steps towards ending violations of women's rights in East Timor.

RAPE, SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARRASSMENT

Rape is the most common form of gender-specific torture perpetrated against East Timorese women, and constitutes a violation of both sexual and reproductive rights. This type of violation is not simply a matter of sexual imbalance between the influx of male soldiers and the local women. It is a weapon of the occupying troops, used to subdue the local population. It is also a weapon used to destroy the opponent's culture, by biologically "de-purifying" their ethnic constituency.(4)

Unfortunately, this inhuman behaviour has already been followed by some of the East Timorese members of the Indonesian military. In June 1994, DDS, an East Timorese member of the Indonesian security forces, was detained in Baucau for allegedly raping and then killing an eighteen year old East Timorese woman in a village in Quelicai, Baucau. He was handed over to the Indonesian police commander in Dili to be prosecuted.

In 1975, when the Indonesian troops landed in East Timor, they "asked for girls or simply chased any women they found attractive". Stories could be heard throughout East Timor about Indonesian soldiers abusing and raping girls of twelve to thirteen years of age and women, including pregnant women. They seemed to prefer the "mesti=E7a" girls, those of mixed Timorese and Portuguese descent, but they were also interested in other East Timorese.(5)

An East Timorese of Chinese descent, who spoke Bahasa Indonesia for trading with West Timor, was forced to interpret for the soldiers. After coming back, he told his niece, 'Olinda' (not her real name), how the Indonesian soldiers were raping East Timorese women. She became so frightened that she cut her long hair and cried and cried. Many young East Timorese girls also cut their hair and wore T-shirts and shorts, to disguise themselves as boys. Sometimes, although they dressed like boys but did not really look like boys, soldiers touched their breasts, to check whether they were boys or girls. So, to avoid being touched, the girls had to look dirty so the soldiers would not be interested in touching them. They wore dirty clothes, didn't comb their hair, went barefoot, and if their breasts had started to develop, they wrapped their breasts in order to flatten them.(6)

From 1975, the residence of the then Bishop of Dili, Dom Martinho da Costa Lopes, was full of girls seeking refuge from the soldiers. Typically, soldiers came in the evening to the parents' house, saying that the commander wanted to interview them, or wanted to ask the girls to go on Indonesia's national television (TVRI). Even after the Bishop went to complain to the highest-ranking officer, there were still soldiers who tried to sneak around the Bishop's fences to get the girls, but they were thrown out of the house by the Bishop himself.

As Dom Martinho tells his story, before he was replaced by the Vatican for his outspoken criticisms of the Indonesian occupation forces:

"People came all the time to tell me in secret, to clear their conscience of the things they were forced to do or see. Even out of the confessional, all the time people were coming, knocking softly on my door to talk to me because they felt so guilty when they were forced by the soldiers to do things they knew were wrong. ...They come to tell it, women too, even young girls... One young girl was put in a tank of water together with a Timorese man and the soldiers tell them to have sex. They're in front of the soldiers in a tank of water! The Timorese do not even know each other. They cannot do this thing of course, they turn away, they are shy. Some of these sorts of things make me think they are quite mad, these soldiers. They seemed to have no moral sense, no humanity. One of their favourite customs was to rape the wife in front of the husband, right there, sometimes the children there too. For Timorese people worse than physical suffering was the moral suffering of these things, the humiliation, taking away the dignity of people. I said to Indonesian officers, 'Don't you have mothers, sisters, do you know what it means to be human?'" (7)

In the smaller places, far away from Dili, the soldiers could carry out their sexual attacks without having to worry about the Bishop's protests. On one occasion in Manatuto, the soldiers came to a house when they knew that the husband had gone to Dili for business, and raped the wife, in front of her three small children. The soldiers took turns raping the poor woman, while the others stole things from the house. When the husband returned and complained to the soldiers' commander, none of the soldiers were punished. His wife survived, but she was very sad after the experience.(8)

In 1978, young Timorese women, detained by the local military command (Kodim) in Viqueque for being members of the women's movement of the Resistance, the OPMT (Popular Organisation of Timorese Women), were subjected to rape for their involvement in the OPMT. Domingos Sarmento Alves, a young East Timorese leader studying in Portugal testified:

"Every night one [OPMT member] would be taken by the troops and raped, sometimes as many as three rapes a night. We children had to watch this. This was when I began to hate the Indonesian soldiers who I thought were 'communists'".(9)

"Security-linked" rapes

The wives, sisters, and other female relatives of freedom fighters have been subjected to rape by Indonesian soldiers as a form of revenge against the freedom fighters, or to force the freedom fighters to surrender to the Indonesian troops. This is illustrated by the testimony of Donaciano Gomes. Gomes had been detained in four different military headquarters in Dili for fifteen days from January to February 1990, for his involvement in the demonstrations during the earlier visit of Pope John Paul II to Dili. After his release, he was eventually able to flee East Timor, and gave the following testimony to Amnesty International:

"Among the other prisoners there were women, who we were told were raped. There was one woman who was from Iliomar [south Lautem], whose husband had been a guerilla commander and had been shot dead at the same time that she was captured. She was kept in a separate room, where she was raped, and had become pregnant, supposedly by a Captain. Her name was Justina Moniz".(10)

In 1995, one woman and her family were tortured for several days by Indonesian soldiers in Baucau who were looking for her twenty-two year old son, a freedom fighter. When she denied knowing his whereabouts, she was stripped naked, beaten and kicked and subjected to torture by electric shock. Three days after her arrest, one of her nephews and her unmarried sister-in-law were called in for questioning. They too were interrogated under torture; her sister-in-law was also sexually abused.(11)

On 25 November 1992, at 4.30 a.m., Armandina dos Santos, a former Indonesian civil servant and youngest sister of the imprisoned East Timorese Resistance leader, Jos=E9 Alexandre ("Xanana") Gusmao, was detained by the Indonesian army's Special Forces, Kopassus, in their main interrogation centre in Colmera, Dili. She was arrested with her husband, Gilman Exposto dos Santos, two of their teenage children, another of Xanana's sisters and her husband, six of their children, and both of Xanana's parents.(12)

Armandina and Gilman, however, were the longest time detained among Xanana's relatives. While in detention, Armandina was interrogated and had to sleep in a separate room from her husband. During the interrogation sessions, she was sexually harassed and raped by the Kopassus soldiers. Apart from "getting back" at Xanana, the soldiers also seemed to be furious that a sister of Xanana had been appointed as the personal secretary of Mrs Carrascalao, the governor's wife. They suspected Armandina of being a political link between Xanana and Carrascalao.(13)

Other rapes

According to an undated Clandestine Front report, received from a confidential source, Lourenca, aged 18, from Dare, a village to the south of Dili, was raped on August 20, 1990, by soldiers from Battalion 164. The rape saved her brother from being extra-judicially executed by the soldier.

Another six rape cases, committed by Indonesian soldiers between 1990 and 1992 in the district of Ainaro, were reported in the same undated Clandestine Front report:

Alian=E7a (14), who was born in Mulo, Hatu Builiko, and lived in Mau Siga, was raped by the 613th Battalion commander in Mau Siga on February 15, 1991, and was forced to continue having extra-marital sex with the commander, to save her life.

Rosa (13), born in Mau Siga, Hatu Bui Liko and lived in Mau Siga, was raped by a soldier from the 613th Battalion in Mau Siga on May 30, 1991, to force her to uncover her contacts with the guerilla fighters.=20

Lorena (15), born in Tatiri Mulo, Hato Bui Liku and lived in Tatiri, was raped by a soldier from the 164th Battalion in Tatiri on September 19, 1990, and was threatened to be killed.

Mariana dos Santos (16), born in Mulo, Hato Bui Liku and lived in Dare, was raped by a soldier from the 164th Battalion on March 10, 1990, and was threatened to be killed.

Rosa Kurvan (17), born in Mulo, Hatu Bui Liku and lived in Dare, was raped by a soldier from the 726th Battalion on May 1, 1992, and was threatened to be killed.

Aida (19), born in a place between Hatu Kero, Mau Siga and Hatu Bui Liku and lived in Hatu Kero, was raped by the commander of the 164th Battalion on May 13, 1990, to save the life of her brother.

New soldiers are stationed in East Timor every three months, and schoolgirls are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse because of their visibility as they walk to school each day:

"The soldiers go to schools looking for girls, [and] follow them home.=20 Then the soldiers call the boys on watch duty, and the unit will go to the girls' house while the boys are away. They take the girls, go and rape them, and do all kinds of rape. Girls know they have to be quiet and can't tell anyone".(14)

In East Timor, as in other societies, pregnant women are respected and well protected by the rest of the society. It is not surprising that "Edhina" (not her real name), in an interview with Michele Turner, said she was shocked when her nephew's wife was raped by an Indonesian soldier. As she told her story:

"My nephew's wife was a pretty girl pregnant with their first child, soon to give birth. The husband went to work and the wife was home alone and a Javanese soldier came and raped her. The baby died. All of us were so shocked. In all our lives before nothing like this could ever happen. Pregnant women everyone respected, even a husband didn't make love with his pregnant wife in case of harm. They told us the war was over in Dili but still they act like that. These foreigners are not human, they are devils. Of course it doesn't just happen to this girl, it happens to many other girls. Sometimes they rape the wife in front of the husband. If he does anything he will be killed".(15)

On September 3, 1995, Reuters published the story of Maria (not her real name), 25, who hid the bulk of her unborn baby under a dirty T-shirt. She was six months pregnant by an Indonesian soldier who allegedly forced his way into her house in a village near Lospalos, past her mother and father, and raped her. "He had a gun and I was afraid", she said, crying. She added, "I have not heard from him since. Not a letter or anything".

Isabella (not her real name), 29, lived in the same village as Maria, a primitive hamlet of leaf and mud huts on East Timor's northern coast. She had two daughters, one seven years old and one two years old, from two fathers, both of them Indonesian soldiers who she said raped her. The girls were given Indonesian names in bitter memory of their fathers. "I have no protection because I live alone with my younger sister, as my parents are already dead, and one of my brothers was killed by the Indonesians," she said in her interview with Reuters.(16)

A recent case, which received extensive media publicity and was reported to the National Human Rights Commission (KomnasHAM) in Jakarta by fourteen human rights organisations, was the case of Alian=E7a Henrique dos Santos, aged 23.(17) Alian=E7a was arrested on 5 December 1995, together with seven members of her family, by more than ten soldiers in Atabae, Bobonaro district, where she was in hiding after being accused of harbouring members of the armed East Timorese Resistance at her home in Li=E7apat. All eight detainees were beaten and Alian=E7a was reported to have been tied up and threatened with a knife before being taken to KORAMIL (Sub-District Military Command) in Ermera. In the fourteen days Alian=E7a was detained there, she was subjected to torture and also raped by an unidentified Indonesian soldier. The soldier threatened to kill her if she reported the rape.

Alian=E7a and the other detainees were transferred to a Rajawali military post at Luli Rema, where she was raped twice by a soldier ranked sergeant (Sersan Kepala). At night the soldiers slept all around her. While detained at the post, Alian=E7a was forced to obey orders from the soldiers and accede to all the needs of the post such as boiling water and other duties. It was only after the group of detainees were discovered by a parishioner, who reported the case to the parish priest, that Alian=E7a and her relatives were released on 16 December.(18) One media report about Alian=E7a's case said that Colonel Soekotjo, an official at the Dili Military Command denied the report of rape.(19) It is believed an investigation into the allegations is being undertaken by KomnasHAM (20) and the ETHRC welcomes this investigation.

In January 1996, Juliana Pereira and Martinha Pereira were arrested together with Domingos de Jesus Xavier, and accused of harbouring Falintil guerrillas. They were reported to have been severely tortured by a policeman named Afonso and the local military head there, and the women were also reported to have been raped.(21)

In July 1996, the Free East Timor Japan Coalition, presented three rape cases in their petition to the UN Special Committee of 24:

Sometimes the rape takes place in the presence of the husband, as in the case of the wife of Lucas Bayasa. In this case the husband became mentally unstable after witnessing his wife's rape, and the woman herself gave birth to the child of the rapist.

Ms. A, who lives in a village in the Lospalos area, was six months pregnant at the time of the interview as the result of rape by a Private Second Class "W" of the 612th Battalion. According to Ms. A, the soldier burst into her house armed with an M16 rifle and attacked her. He threatened to shoot her parents if she resisted and told them that they would be shot if they interfered. He returned a number of times after that. She became pregnant as a result, but the soldier went back to Indonesia when his twelve months of duty were up, taking no responsibility for the child.

Ms. H (30), another woman interviewed, has two children, 2 and 7 years old, conceived as a result of rape by two different soldiers belonging to Battalion 511. Neither of the soldiers took any responsibility for the children.

Mr. X, a man interviewed in one village, said that as many as fifty women in the village had been sexually abused by Indonesian soldiers. His younger sister, Ms. B (25) gave birth to a baby (10 months old at the time of the interview) conceived when she was raped by an Indonesian soldier.(22)

On 23 March 1997, thirty-three East Timorese youths, including two women, were detained at Becora prison for their alleged involvement in a demonstration which took place that day at the Mahkota hotel in Dili. They have since been charged and are awaiting trial. It has been alleged that the two female detainees, Celina da Costa, 20, and Olga Quintao Amaral, 19, had their clothes torn and were severely beaten and raped by members of the Indonesian military.(23)

On 25 March 1997, Rajawali troops arrested Celestina of Ataubu-Lasaun village in the Atsabe sub-district. It has been alleged that prior to Celestina's arrest, her house was sprayed with bullets and she was taken to the bush where she was tortured and raped several times. Also arrested were Armando Magalhaes who was taken into the bush where he was strung up from a tree and punched and kicked, and Cosme. The three youths were suspected of cooperating with Falintil by providing logistical support.(24)

Other forms of sexual abuse and harassment

In addition to rape, East Timorese women allege that they have been sexually abused and harassed by members of the military during periods of mass arbitrary arrests when house-to-house searches are conducted. Often this occurs when the husband is already detained or in hiding, and sometimes the intention is to obtain information about family members.

Madalena Pinto was intimidated and interrogated on 16 August 1996 and accused of contacting members of the Resistance. It is believed the interrogation lasted all night and at approximately 10.00am the next morning she was coerced into declaring that she had had sexual relations with a member of the Resistance forces.(25) Two days later, Luciana Alves was interrogated and accused of giving refuge to a Resistance guerrilla. During the interrogation she was slapped and punched four times in the back. At a subsequent interrogation she was coerced into saying that she had had sexual relations with a Resistance guerrilla. On 1 September, soldiers from the Rajawali battalion again visited her in her home, beat her again, claiming that she had been visited by three Resistance fighters.(26)

Some women are harassed simply because of their family relationship with alleged members of the Clandestine Resistance or Falintil. Teresa de Fatima and her four children Elda Pinto, Rita, Bicau and Bi-Soi, were arrested on 2 August, 1996, in Nunuhou, after fleeing to the mountains for safety following the military crack-down in the area. After Teresa de Fatima and her children fled, her house was burnt down by the Indonesian military. Teresa de Fatima was the wife of Julio "Maureha", a Falintil commander who was alleged to have been involved in the killing of the Indonesian army captain.(27)

Beatriz Ximenes was picked up by police on 3 June at 11.30a.m., following the arrest of her husband David Dias Ximenes on 31 May 1997. David Dias Ximenes was arrested under suspicion of being the mastermind behind the 28 May assault on BRIMOB (Mobile Police Brigade) headquarters. Police told Beatriz she was being taken to see her husband's lawyer but she was in fact taken to POLDA (the local police station) in Comoro, where it is believed she was interrogated. She was released at around midnight that day but it is believed she continues to be subjected to intimidation.(28)

FORCED 'MARRIAGES' AND 'COMFORT WOMEN'

Becoming mistresses, or "local wives" of Indonesians soldiers, offers some "protection" for certain East Timorese women from continuous rape by other soldiers. The soldier keeps the young woman with him while he stays in East Timor, and when he goes, abandons her. According to an East Timorese woman who fled to Australia and latersubmitted a testimony for the 1982 Australian Senate Inquiry into the situation of the people of East Timor, the country is full of children borne out of those compulsory relationships.(29)

Miranda Sissons reported that accounts of forced "marriages" to Indonesian soldiers, in which soldiers forced women into sexual relationships or to commit sexual acts under threat of violence or retribution, were common:

"This is a way of surviving there, for them to survive. It's a very common thing in Timor, if the father has passed away and they have a family. It's not that they want to become prostitutes, but they are forced to do it because if

they don't, the others are going to get killed. So they're forced to do certain things with them. If the mother doesn't do it, they go to the daughters, or to their younger daughters".(30)

Women forced into marriages with Indonesian soldiers are usually abandoned when soldiers leave the province at the end of their duties:

"Many young women become prostitutes because of the army. They force them, to save their parents or because they've lost their virginity. At night in the country, they used to force the men to go on guard duty, and then come and abuse the women. In the countryside this is still happening. They make a girl choose between her parents and a soldier".(31)

Adriana dos Reis, a young woman living in the village of Abafala in the subdistrict of Quelicai, Baucau, had been kept as the mistress of the local army commander (Dandim). Eventually she got pregnant and gave birth to a son. Later the Dandim's wife came to join her husband in Baucau and Adriana dos Reis and her baby had to return to the village. However, Adriana continued to be harassed and was threatened by the officer's men not to show her face and not to tell the officer's wife that she had been the officer's forced mistress. In early 1994, to prevent the young woman from reporting the officer's misbehaviour to his superiors in Dili, Adriana was forced to sign a letter addressed to Indonesian-appointed Governor Jose Abilio Osorio Soares, in which she stated that she apologised for besmirching the officer's good name, and admitted that she had tempted the officer into having sex with her. Fortunately, the letter was intercepted by Bishop Belo before it was sent, and the Bishop went to the governor to explain the background of the letter.(32)

Emilia Baptista Gusmao, wife of the most well known Resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao, was often picked up in the middle of the night to be interrogated. The soldiers told her to write a letter to Xanana and his comrades, urging them to surrender. Sometimes they threatened her by pointing a gun at her head. Other times they tried a softer tactic, suggesting she move to Jakarta, for the sake of the children's education. Eventually, on May 20, 1990, she managed to migrate to Australia with her two children, through the assistance of the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross).(33) On May 25, 1993, three years after settling in Melbourne, she wept when speaking publicly of the child she bore by an Indonesian army officer, after the Indonesian military took over her home in Dili. She said the child had died. In an interview with Australian Radio National, she described the experience with the Indonesian officer as the worst of her life. Yet, she grieved when the child died and said she would carry the grief of the dead child all her life, "because that child was my child".

In 1990, six women from one village(34) were abducted by Indonesian troops. They were ordered to pass themselves off as supporters of the Resistance guerillas, with whom they were to make contact for the purpose of gathering information for the Indonesian troops and leading them to the guerillas' hideout. The women were also used as sex slaves by the troops. Ms "C", the woman who related these events, said she had been forced to do these things since 1990 and was still forced to provide sex to the soldiers who came to her house. The soldiers told her that if she refused they would take it that she was cooperating with Fretilin.(35)

In March 1994, a widow called Joana Maria, from a village near Same, the capital of Manufahi, was used as a sex slave by soldiers from the Battalion 312, who were supposedly stationed in the village as part of the army's "Territorial Operation", an operation which is supposed to provide civic support.(36)

In July 1996, Odilia Victor, one of the two East Timorese women who sought asylum in the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in January 1996 and later went to Portugal as a refugee, spoke on the issue of sexual abuse of East Timorese women during her speaking tour of Japan. She told of the tragic experience of her sister as a "local wife" and "sex slave", and of other women also used as sex slaves by the soldiers. At the time of the Indonesian invasion, Odilia's sister was married and expecting a child. Her husband fled to the bush, while she stayed behind in Dili. The Indonesian military took her to a house where she was confined as a sex slave for about one year. There were seven other women there, also forced to serve the Indonesian soldiers. The house was located on Kakau Lidun Street in Dili and right in front of it was the headquarters of the Brigade Mobile Brigade (BRIMOB) police.

In 1978, this same sister was forced to become the "local wife" of an Indonesian Air Force officer, Agus Korek, and she later bore a child by him. The Indonesian officer had a wife in his own country, and after his six months' duty ended in East Timor he went home, leaving behind Odilia's sister who was expecting his child. The house her sister lived in as the local wife of the officer was next door to her family home, but she was never able to set foot in her own home, nor did any of her family dare try to get her back. One might think that a woman in such a situation could simply run away. Odilia pointed out, however, that the women who are singled out to work as "comfort women" usually have a low level of education, making them particularly vulnerable to intimidation. But,

she said, it is also very difficult to run away because of the extensive presence of plain clothes intelligence agents living in the community who constantly monitor peoples' movements.

Her sister's tragedy did not end there. Although she was eventually able to get out of her situation as a "local wife", when her own husband came back from the bush his family spoke ill of his wife to him, accusing her of having sold herself to the Indonesians. Although her husband understood the true situation, the couple never lived together after that. Odilia testified that women are forced to act as sex slaves for Indonesian soldiers in other areas outside Dili. In the village of Aileu, Odilia saw several women who were targeted as sex slaves. They were visited almost every night by different Indonesian soldiers in turn. The soldiers gave the women canned foods from their military ransom, not money. The women could not get out of their situation even when the soldiers they served were transferred back to Indonesia, because the soldiers would tell their replacements that these women were there to serve them.(37)

This system of segregating certain women in a village for sexual exploitation has another unfortunate result, that of creating divisions among women themselves. The "sex slaves" are cut off from the sympathy and support of other women because they are seen as "women who take goods and money for sex".(38)

Apart from the old "divide and rule" tactic, this Indonesian military practice of keeping sex slaves has another function, namely surveillance. The wives of guerilla leaders, left behind in the towns and villages, are frequently forced to live with Indonesians or East Timorese in the pay of the Indonesian authorities. This is particularly the case if their husbands are in important positions in the Resistance. This is both in order to monitor any communication with their husbands in the bush and to compromise the women in the eyes of the Timorese community as "unfaithful" wives, thereby isolating them. This practice is, in other words, part of Indonesian military strategy to weaken the unity and morale of the East Timorese Resistance.(39)

PROSTITUTION

One of the consequences of ongoing violations against East Timorese women is the increase in the number of women becoming prostitutes. In interviews of East Timorese women conducted by Miranda Sissons in Australia, many women unilaterally raised the issue of prostitution as a significant problem. According to one twenty-two year old woman, "Even if you are a good girl you have to do it." (40)

There are three main reasons why large numbers of East Timorese girls and young women have been forced into prostitution. First, some women become prostitutes as a "post-rape consequence". This point was emphasised by Maria Transfiguracao Sarmento and Odilia Victor, the two female freedom fighters who sought asylum in the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in January 1996. They linked this prostitution 'drive' with the fact that many young East Timorese women had lost their virginity due to rape by the occupation troops.(41)

Second, as pointed out by Shirley Shackleton(42) other women resort to prostitution because of the high levels of unemployment for East Timorese people in the territory.(43) Third, and this point is linked to the previous two, many women need to support themselves and their children during the absence of their men fighting in the mountains, or after the men have been killed by the Indonesian troops.

An official survey, carried out on the five hundred prostitutes officially registered by the Dili municipality police unit (MAPOLRES), shows that 60% of them became prostitutes because of economic difficulties, 20% because they were divorced by their husbands, and 20 % because of frustration. These statistics, however, applied to the entire population of five hundred officially registered prostitutes, who came from East Java, South Sulawesi, and West Timor, as well as East Timor.(44) It does not tell us the proportion of each category for the East Timorese prostitutes. Nor does it tell us anything about the East Timorese women who are not officially registered, but are having to work as prostitutes.

An increasing number of East Timorese women have joined the influx of prostitutes from Java, Sulawesi and West Timor, who since 1984 have entered the territory and contributed to the population of 3,000 prostitutes.(45) In Dili, prostitutes operate from a brothel near the Comoro airport, in the Areia Branca (white sand beach) tourist resort to the east of the town, and even in Dili's two luxury hotels, Hotel Mahkota and the New Resende Inn. The brothels are not confined to Dili though, since the prostitutes also operate in all district capitals, mostly under the cover of restaurants, where customers can ask for "raw meat" (daging mentah), borrowing from the local Indonesian language. These brothels have been frequented by Indonesian bureaucrats and officers, whose cars with red registration plates have often been seen parked in front of the shops.(46)

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to ensure greater promotion and protection of the human rights of women in East Timor, the East Timor Human Rights Centre urges the Indonesian government to:

1. End its tolerance of violations of women's human rights in East Timor and conform to its international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW).

2. Ratify and implement the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (which the government signed in 1985), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

3. Invite the Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit East Timor in 1997 so that he can report to the UN Commission on Human Rights by March 1998. The invitation would be in keeping with the undertaking made by the Indonesian government in 1996 to invite a Special Rapporteur to the territory and could include consideration of gender-specific forms of torture perpetrated against women.

4. Also invite the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to visit East Timor to examine violations of women's human rights and thereby assist the Indonesian government to fulfil its international obligations.

5. Request the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission (KomnasHAM) to conduct a full and impartial investigation of human rights violations, including rape, perpetrated against East Timorese women, in particular in the last two years. Perpetrators should be promptly brought to justice, removed from government service, and given sentences appropriate to the severity of the crimes.

6. Establish a section within KomnasHAM to deal specifically with allegations of violations against women, especially allegations of rape. Sufficient resources and logistical support should be given to KomnasHAM to enable it to fulfil this function.

7. Act on all KomnasHAM findings of human rights violations against, especially rape.

8. Ensure that female guards are present during interrogation of female detainees in order to reduce the risk of rape and sexual abuse. Also ensure that female detainees are held separately from male detainees.

9. Provide fair and adequate compensation and appropriate medical care to women who are victims of rape and sexual abuse perpetrated by Indonesian authorities.

10. Allow full and unrestricted access to all areas of East Timor for journalists and independent human rights organisations, including the East Timor Human Rights Centre, to enable monitoring and reporting of violations against women.

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